JAMES C. LINS

POLITICAL COLUMNIST

By HEINZ KLOSZ

James C. Lins (the name was originally spelled Lentz) was born in Franklin Township, Columbia County, Pa., November 13, 1860. He came to Reading at an early age, where he was active for a time as a telegraph operator and later also in Kempton. Upon becoming a printer he published the weekly "Kempton Rural Press" which was moved to Reading in 1890 and changed to "Reading Press". When the weekly newspapers were forced out of the field, Lins carried on as a printer. He died in Reading, April 12, 1918.

Lins' best - known contribution in the field of dialect lore is his "Common Sense Dictionary of Pennsylvania German 1887) of which a second edition appeared in 1895. It has been claimed recently (see **The Pennsylvania Dutchman** for Aug. 4, 1949) that this dictionary is largely the work of a certain Amandus Leibold, a rural teacher. Much of the dictionary is, however, taken over from A. R. Horne's Manual, published in 1875, but the number of entries has been increased from about 5,500 to about 9,600, chiefly by the introduction of compounds, idioms and words derived from the English. The introduction is notable among other things for calling Pennsylvania German persistently a "language" and not a dialect, as was also done many years later by J. William Frey, in the introduction to his Pennsylvania German Grammar (1942).

Well - nigh forgotten today is Lins, the dialect columnist. Under the assumed name of "Sam Kisselmoyer vun Wohlha verschtedel" he commented for many years on the current affairs of his county and his state and nation. The following is a fair specimen of a Sam Kisselmoyer letter. We have retained the original orthography. —

Wohlhavershtedel, Sept. der 12t, 1894

Mister Drooker:

Die wuch hob ich 'n shtick in 'n Fildelfy tzeitung g'sahna dos 'n mon naigsht on Elsdown finf-un-tzwonsich dawler g'fined un fooftzain moonet in die bresent g'shteckt worra is fer tzwae quart karsha shtaila dos ferleicht tzain cent wart wora.

Now ich glawb net on shtaila, un die Ann aw net, ovver mier hen ousgamocht won seller mon net gilty is fon onnera dinga shtaila wie sel, dos der shquire woo 'n warnd gevva hut fer so eppes set selver in die bresent g' shteckt sei un der judge woo ehn g'sentenced hut dertzu.

Ich hob shon feel fum Judge Olbrecht fon Lechaw g'hard, un hob nuch immer gamained ar ware fair un shquare, un ovver ich glawb net dos 's fair is fer so 'n unbarrem-hartzichy shtrofe 'ma mon tsu gevva fer so 'n trifle. Ich wase net wie 's in onnera counties is, ovver won 'n mon in Barricks county on die court kumt mit so 'n penny case wie sel ward ar ousgalocht un hame g'shickt so bol dos ar die unkushta batzawled hut. Old Barricks is tsu bissy fer sich boddera mit so socha.

Die Fildelfy Press hut 'n orrick grose gagrish gamocht waga die blech factries, dos sie now oll nunner shtuppa mista, un ovver ich denk der brooder Shmidt wos der editter er is fon der Press hut nuch 'n dale fon die Rooslenner ehrem shtawb in seina awga, shunsht kent ar sahna dos sel net wore is. Ich hob vusht die wuch in der tzeitung g'sahna dos die blech factries in Norrisshtedel, Harrisbarrick un Pitsbarrick ufshtarta, un ains fon die graishta factries in der weld sul gabowd warra in Pitsbarrick, un sul in sex moonet reddy sei fer shtarta.

Ich wooner eb der brooder Shmidt net aw ferleicht im Bengy Harrison seim grossdawdy sei shtitz g'falla is un kon net recht rous sahna? Ich main selly shtitz wos der Bengy ehm gevva hut wie ar ehn noch Rooslond g'shickt hut fer minister. Ferleicht maind ar aw die leit in Wohlhavershtedtel warda so dum un data ken onnera tzeitunga laisa dos wie seiny, un ovver ar is gons ferdeihenkert g'fool'd. Niemond grickt sei tzeitung im shtedel dos wie der old Womsher, un dar graicht sie net won ar sie batzawla mist, fer ar is tsu geitzich.

SAM KISSELMOYER

What is perhaps most striking about this letter is its seriousness with only a Bikini suit to give it the appearance of humorous fiction. Except for the passing reference to his wife Ann in the second paragraph, and to Wohlhavershtedel's Womsher (a character invented by him) at the end of the letter, there is nothing that might not as well have been written in an English editorial. In 1918 Reichard said of Sam Kisselmoyer's column: "Very many of these letters are distinctly political and do not take the trouble to introduce fictitious names; the only reason why they did not appear on the editorial page (Lins was himself the owner and editor) is because of the greater license allowed to this letter column (Harry Hess Reichard in "Pennsylvania German Dialect Writings, p. 221).

Mr. Lins, then, gives an example of the adaptability of Pennsylvania German to journalistic assignments, and many of his letters are proof of the existence, in the so-called dialect, of a fairly developed non-fictional prose. Some letters of his, while equally preoccupied with politics, are more liberally dotted with humorous remarks:

Wohlhavershtedel, August der 20t, 1894

Mister Drooker:

Well der Grover Cleveland hut avva sel Wilson bill net g'signed. Die Ann hut gamained ar het sei nawma draw shreiva sella, un ovver wie ich ehra mohl explained hob wie die dinga shtain hut sie mer recht gevva.

Der old Womsher hut gamained ar het's tsurick shicka sella eb die tzain dawg uf whora so dos sel McKinley bill net dote gamocht ware worra, un ovver ar mus net denka dos der Grover so dum is wie oll sell.

Ich wed dos feel fon die Republicans, un arbardich die grosa capitalists, in hase wasser g'huckt hen fer tzain dawg.

Die Fildelfy PRESS, selly grose blobainich tzeitung main'd now wunners wos sie date fer publisha dos der Cleveland so 'n bill 'n law warra hut lussa, un hut's net tsurick g'shickt nooch 'm house fer die Senniters nuch lenger drivver fechta. Ufcourse sie wisse wull dos won der Cleveland 's tsurick g' shickt het dos 's net gapast het kenna warra.

Now sel bill is net uf naisght wos 's sei set, un sel is die shuld dos 's so long ganumma hut fer 's tsu passa beim Sennit. Sel wore now grawd 'n g'shicht wie der Check Hulsknipper mohl g'hot hot wie ar nuch kohla g'fohra hut fer om olda Hasapetzer sei fonnis. Ar hut ols drei geil-un tzwae aisel in der foor g'hot un so bol dos 's selly aisel eikumma is don hen sie sich g'shteiper'd un hen backa wella. Ufcourse die drei geil wora shtarricker un die aisel hen 's letsht ufgevva missa.

Won net so feel goota Demograwdisha Senniters dort gawest warda fer selly shtreidicha ivverweldicha, I, don hetta sie evva ufgevva missa.

Ich bin goot derfor dos won sel Wilson bill net ferennert ware worra beim Sennit dos der Cleveland 's grawd g'sign 'd het, un ovver 'sis so rum gadrusha worra, so dos 's die grosa capitalists net so hard dreft, dos 'n President dos ainicher reshpect hut fer die shofleit net so 'n bill signa date.

Sel bill is net naigsht wos die goota Demograwda 's hovva hen wella, un ovver 'siss duch 'n dousend mohl besser wie seller McKinley rawb tariff bill, un fer sel hetta die Republicans garn g'hotta dos der President's tsurick g'shickt het eb 's 'n law ware worra.

Ich un der old Womsher sin shear gore shtreidich worra geshter ovet wie ich tsu ehm g'sawt hob ich date glawva dos ar 'n hoodo ware. Sel hut ehn gons ferflomt base gamocht, un ovver 's hut tsu nix amount.

Ich denk won's net fer der Fred Sackwommes un der Check Heckerbossem gawest ware don het ar broweerd fer my necktie ferreisa, un ovver sie hen ehn ruich sei mocha. Ich bin fro dos sie ehn net gae galust hen fer ich bin ennyhow ken gooter freind tsu 'm duckter Kupernickel, un won ich mei hend uf ehn grickt het ware ar in tzwae manoota may dote wie lawendich gawest.

Ich wase dos die Ann's galicha het won ich un der Womsher shtreid grickt hetta, fer no darft ich nimmy nivver gae un 'n pull greega on sellem olda eppeljack.

SAM KISSELMOYER

Sam Kisselmoyer, the staunch party man, represents the other extreme to that genial gentleman, Danny Kratzer, alias E. M. Eberman, (1834 - 1903) of Bethlehem, Pa., whose letters remained almost untinged by politics. That Lins should have taken to the use of the dialect in his newspaper is all the more remarkable, since Pennsylvania German was not his mother tongue. In Columbia County, where he was born, it had begun to fade out at an early time. He acquired it only after his parents had removed to Berks County. So we may remember James C. Lins for three reasons: 1. As the maker, or at least co - maker, of a dialect dictionary; 2. — As a convinced returnee from Pennsylvania English to Pennsylvania German (or, to put it a little less hyphenatingly, from English to Pennsylfaanisch); 3. — As the co-shaper of a distinctly non-fictional Pennsylfaanisch prose the existence of which is something Pennsylvania Germans might well be proud of. For experience shows that in the gradual unfolding of literary languages the forging of prose is harder to accomplish than the flowering of fine lyrics.

ALLE SADDE WADDE

Ach, was hot's doch so viele Sadde Pennsylvaanisch Deitsche Waddel

Here follows another questionnaire from C. Richard Beam, soliciting the aid of our readers in his compilation of a Pennsylvania German Dictionary. This is an Herculean task in which all who are interested in our dialect can help. The need for a dialect dictionary was early felt. An almost forgotten attempt was that of James C. Lins. His **Common Sense Dictionary of Pennsylvania Germans** was published in 1887. Heinz Kloss, Germany's greatest authority on Pennsylvania German, (and who has several times made longer sojourns among us) writes about Lins in today's Eck.

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1. The Old Order Mennonites of Lancaster County use the following forms: **Hawwerschdoppie, die Weezeschdopple, en Schdoppel, en Welschkannschdoppel** (Sing. **die Schdoppel**; plural, **die Schdopple**).

2. Do you call fall (autumn) **Harbscht** or **Schpotyaahr?**

3. Would you say: **'S iss harbschdich** or **es geht em Harbscht zu?**

4. How do you use the word **brechdich? biessierlich?**

5. What are typical P.G. names for horses, for cows in your section?

6. Please explain the differences between **fagraawe** and **begraawe** as used in your family.

7. Do you say **Deifel** or **Deiwel?**

8. List the common ways of saying "Thank you" in P.G. known to you **(denki, denk yaa, er hot sich bedankt,** etc.).

9. P.G. reports the following is said to a little girl when she has done something especially pleasing: **Nau denk yaa, du gleeni Fraa fun Kanada!**

10. What is the plural form of **die Heemet? Heemeds** or **Heemeder?**

11. How do you use the word **heemlich?** What does it mean in English?

12. List all the words known for cemetery in your area. Which are the most common? What is the plural of **der Graabhof?**

13. How do you say: It smells good. It tastes good. Taste it!

14. P. H. uses the words **Weggli** and **es Buggi.** Is there a difference in the use in your area? For instance, do the older folks say **Weggli** and the younger folks **Buggi?**

15. Can you add to or correct this list? **Es Sootland reddi griegge, en Sootland mache, bluge, schaffe,** Difference between **Sootland** and Sootfeld?

16. Would you say: **Er iss heem kumme gsookt** (or **gschwenkt**) **fum Regge?**

17. P. H. reports the following uses of the verb **aan-geh: Welle mer** aangeh mit? **Du bischt am Aangeh mit dei Sach. Geh aan!** (Geh weck!). Also **geh aan!** for **nemms aan!**

18. Would you say **Ich duh oft mei Schinnbee schinne oder faschinne?**

19. How many uses do you know for the noun **der Schinner?** Ex., **Ich hab en Schinner** (a scratch) **uff die Gnie grickt fum Fall. En Schinner (en Boshafdicher Bu).** Do you know **der Schinnerhannes** and **der Schinnerhannes grickt dich** (said to a naughty boy). **Was der Schinner geht aa do?** Can you add to this list?

20. How many uses for **flechde** and **zeppe** do you know? **Was dutt mer flechde?** Was dutt mer zeppe?

21. How do you use the P.G. word **Kunscht?**

22. Do you say **Es hot mich faschreckt** or **Er hot mich faschrocke?**

23. The verb **schore:** Ich sett mei Gaarde schore Ich hab der **Gaarde gschort. Der Gaarde iss gschore.** Let's hear your version.

24. Was dutt mer maahle? **Mer kann Schtee maahle. Mer kann Fleesch maahle. Mer kann Kallich, Bledder, un Welschkannfuder maahle. Was noch?**

25. What is the difference between **Kannfuder, Langfuder,** and **Kahrfuder?**

Please send answers and comments to: C. Richard Beam, Editor, 56 Forney Drive, Lititz, Pa. 17543.